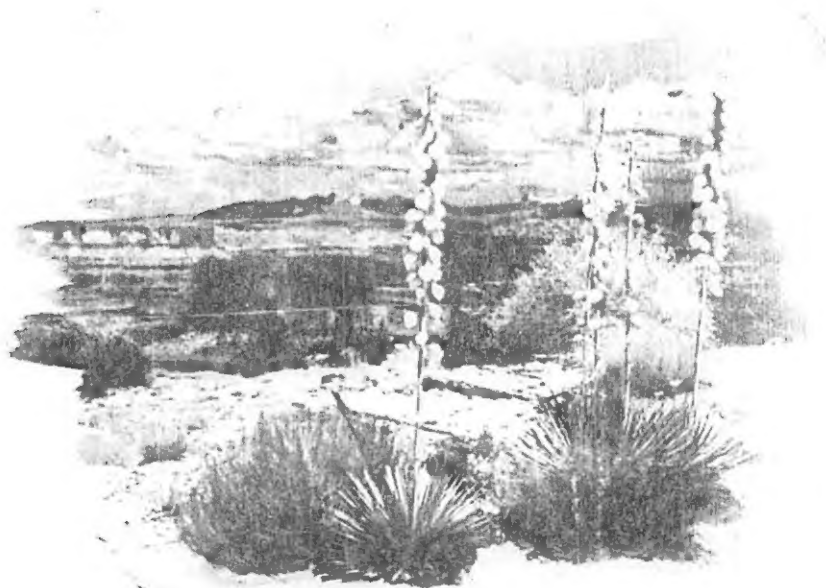


ORSON PRATT'S VANGUARD COMPANY

A few days before reaching the Great Salt Lake Valley, Brigham Young and some of the members of the group were taken ill with mountain fever. On July 12, the Mormon leader called Orson Pratt to his bedside and said, "Brother Pratt, I want you to take a group of the strongest men and the best equipment and travel ahead of the main company. Make a road and locate the Salt Lake Valley. As soon as I am able to travel, the rest of us will follow you."

Before an hour passed, Pratt's vanguard group, consisting of forty-one men and twenty-five wagons, waved adieu to Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and the others who remained with their leader.

As the sun was nearing the western horizon on July 19, 1847, Orson Pratt and John Brown climbed a mountain peak near East Canyon and looked down upon the



Courtesy of Utah State Department of Publicity and Industrial Development

YUCCA PLANT OR SPANISH BAYONET, BLOOMING HIGH ON THE
VERMILION CLIFFS AT DEAD HORSE POINT, BETWEEN THE COLORADO
AND THE GREEN RIVERS IN UTAH.

the supply of growing fodder on which the live stock of the caravans was compelled to subsist, and many horses, mules, and cattle succumbed in consequence. Then many who started for Utah, Oregon, and California never finished the journey. After the great migration began into the far West, every mile beyond the Missouri was dotted with the whitening bones of beasts that had fallen, and with mounds that marked the graves of men.

Many succumbed to accident and natural illness aggravated by exposure and hardship. John Kaye has told in a pretty little poem of the death of a little child on the plains:

"Two days had the train been waiting,
Laid off from the forward tramp,
When the sick child drooped
And died, and they scooped
Out a little grave near camp.

Outside of civilization,
Far from the abodes of men,
Where the cactus blows
And the wild sage grows,
In the haunts of the wild sage hen.

No trace in range of the vision,
No beautiful flowers bloom,
But a waste of sand,
In a desert land,
Surrounds the little tomb."

As for the stampedes, they were among the worst trials the pioneers could suffer. "Picture to yourselves," says one writer, "three or four hundred head of frightened oxen, steers, cows, etc., running, bellowing, roaring, foaming, mad and furious—the ground shaking beneath their feet like an earthquake, chains rattling, yokes cracking, horns flying, and the cry of the guard: 'Every man in camp turn out!'"